

Alleged Non-Support of Employment Programs

bers of Parliament have a pipeline into the cabinet, especially to the Prime Minister.

Liberal members from Toronto are afraid of the Prime Minister, and I ask why this is so. They recall the treatment received by the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer) when he attempted to put forward a suggestion arising out of the task force report on housing with regard to giving aid to municipalities to form land banks so that the cost of land would be cheaper and as a result so would housing. The hon. member for Trinity was given the Siberian treatment, and he now sits in the corner like a sulking boy while the Prime Minister sits there like a gloating... What shall I say?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Orang-outang.

Mr. Gilbert: Yes, orang-outang. The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp), who represents the constituency of Eglinton, is also afraid of the Prime Minister. He says: "Why should I speak on behalf of the city of Toronto? I have been a civil servant for many years and had a rough time as Minister of Finance. I had a terrible time lifting the 6 per cent ceiling on the bank interest rate, and what an impact that made". Certainly, the minister has had a very difficult time as minister of External Affairs. So, he says: "Why should I become involved in the problems of the people of Toronto? Why should I speak out on behalf of the people on the unemployment problem? Here am I, at my last turn, so why should I annoy the Prime Minister?"

Mr. Sharp: What a speech! Deal with the facts.

Mr. Gilbert: Let me talk about another Liberal member from Toronto, the hon. member for York West (Mr. Givens). The Prime Minister treats him as a professor would treat a grade one schoolchild. He is a former mayor of Toronto, yet he is ignored and snubbed. Is it any wonder that he is not here today to participate in this very important debate? We of the opposition are trying our best to point out to the government the shortcomings of their policies, and the Prime Minister treats us as he treated the Lapalme workers.

I want to deal with an organization set up by the Liberal party to deal with problems in Toronto. This body was given a very fancy name, METPAC, which stands for Metro Planning Action Committee. At the first meeting of this group, they had a great number of books containing a large amount of information. They met with the mayor and the councillors and said there must be liaison between the federal and municipal governments. There was a meeting a week ago in Toronto at which the hon. member for York West (Mr. Givens) revealed what METPAC is all about. He said it is only a consultative body set up for the purposes of discussion. There is no power, there is no input and there is no pipeline to the government. This is what we have.

● (5:20 p.m.)

Let me deal very quickly with the situation in Toronto. It has been said there are between 50,000 and 60,000 unemployed in Toronto. There is a tremendous number of people on the welfare rolls in that city. As has been

[Mr. Gilbert.]

pointed out, if we do not extend the date for the unemployment seasonally adjusted benefits from May 15 to an undetermined date, 10,000 more will be on the welfare rolls. This was one of the two main points referred to at that meeting in the city of Toronto. The meeting requested an extension of the seasonal unemployment benefits from May 15 because of the so-called time lag factor relating to the policy the government has introduced to solve this unemployment problem. Surely, that is not an unreasonable request. I hope the Toronto members, especially the Secretary of State for External Affairs, will persuade the Prime Minister that this is a reasonable request. If anyone has any influence on the great one, it may be the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Gilbert: That was the first point set forth. The second point set forth was that some work programs should be initiated. It was said that between \$3 million and \$3,500,000 was required to solve the unemployment problem. The suggestion was that this would not resolve all unemployment in Toronto but would at least be a start, would give the unemployed some confidence and perhaps would have a multiplier effect.

It was then suggested at the meeting that if the government cannot give a direct grant, for goodness sakes, it should get into a cost-shared program in respect of these works. I should hope that the minister will forget some of the problems he faces in respect of other parts of the world and pay more attention to those problems that prevail in the city of Toronto. He has done a very poor job in respect to some world problems. Surely, he can regain some of this reputation if he considers some of those problems that prevail in the city of Toronto.

Let me have one moment more, Mr. Speaker, and I will be finished. I hope all cities across the country can be cities of which we are proud. They should have beautiful buildings, factories with people who work and have homes. This is what I would really like. What have we got? We have many cities, including Toronto and Montreal, which are known as human zoos with improperly planned buildings, unemployed people, pollution and dirt. It behooves me and all members of the House, more especially the Toronto members and the Secretary of State for External Affairs, to exert some influence in order to get ministers, such as the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Macdonald), to do something in order that we might have better cities and a better country in which to live.

Mr. Hu Harries (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I know it is very inviting to try to lay the total blame in respect to unemployment at the doorstep of government policy; more particularly the anti-inflationary measures that were adopted about a year ago. In my opinion, to do so is to ignore some of the facts the evidence so clearly points out.

Unemployment in Canada today can be attributed in part not to government policy in Canada but to the very direct connection our economy has with the economy of the United States, and to the economic problems faced by